

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

RECEIVED

JUN 16 2000

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of)

Review of the Commission's)
Rules and Policies Affecting the)
Conversion to Digital Television)

MM Docket No 00-39

**REPLY TO COMMENTS IN DOCKET 00-39 BY
LIMA COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION
DBA: WLIO TELEVISION, LIMA OH**

Bruce A. Opperman,
President & General Manager
WLIO Television
1424 Rice Avenue
Lima OH 45805

Frederick R. Vobbe
Chief Engineer
WLIO Television
1424 Rice Avenue
Lima OH 45805

Thursday, June 15, 2000

No. of Copies rec'd 0 + 4
List ABCDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
TRANSMISSION STANDARD	4
8VSB vs COFDM	4
Costs to WLIO Television	4
REPLICATION OF SERVICE	5
Full Replication of Service	5
Coverage via Cable Television	5
Non-Cable/Antenna Reception	6
Historical	6
Legislative Protection	6
CREATION OF WHITE OR UNDERSERVED AREAS	7
MODIFICATION OF CONSTRUCTION PERMIT	8
SUMMARY	9

INTRODUCTION

WLIO Television has operated in Lima, Ohio since April 18, 1953.¹

WLIO Television is ranked in Market 201.²

WLIO Television is owned and operated by Lima Communications Corporation, 1424 Rice Avenue, Lima OH 45805. 419-228-8835.

WLIO Television operates as an NBC affiliate, and provides a valuable source of entertainment, news and information to viewers in West Central Ohio. WLIO Television's track record for participation with the E.A.S. and local emergency services surpasses the expectations of many television broadcast stations. WLIO Television works closely with the Allen County Emergency Management Office, and local law enforcement, to ensure prompt and factual distribution of emergency information to the public.

Bruce A. Opperman is the President and General Manager of WLIO Television. Mr. Opperman has worked for WLIO since September 26, 1966.

Frederick R. Vobbe is the Chief Operator for WLIO Television. Mr. Vobbe has worked for WLIO Television since June 20, 1985.

The replies in this document are made cooperatively by Mr. Opperman and Mr. Vobbe, and are herein referred to as "WLIO". Mr. Opperman and Mr. Vobbe are commenting on behalf of WLIO Television, herein referred to as "WLIO Television".

¹ Originally call sign WLOK, Channel 78, Lima OH, Call changed to WIMA(TV), and finally to WLIO in 1972.

² DMA Rank 201, Nielsen Media Research "Lima OH", February 2000

TRANSMISSION STANDARD

Participants in the comments have given good argument to both sides of the 8VSB versus COFDM transmission standard.

8VSB vs COFDM

WLIO understands that many licensees such as Sinclair favor COFDM. Their concerns are with signal multipath and providing a robust signal through large city infrastructure. WLIO feels comfortable with the ability of 8VSB transmissions to provide a satisfactory signal to its viewers in Lima and surrounding counties.

Costs to WLIO Television

The costs of an 8VSB transmission system versus a COFDM system are major. WLIO feels that it would be a financial burden to implement COFDM. The transmitter size would be larger, and cost more to build. The power consumption would be significant.

It is our opinion that the WLIO Television tower would need major modifications to hold a heavier antenna due to the ERP and TPO. These modifications would involve WLIO Television's NTSC service going off the air while the tower was disassembled and then reassembled to allow for the weight of the antenna.

WLIO therefore supports the 8VSB format, or a method by manufacturers whereby the receiver will automatically accept either format.

REPLICATION OF SERVICE

WLIO's concern is with replicating the present service area that it has had for over 46 years. An inability to reach all households accessing our NTSC signal with WLIO Television's DTV signal would pose a loss of revenues to Lima Communications Corporation and a loss of important service to the viewers of our present NTSC signal.

Full Replication of Service

WLIO feels that replication of DTV service area should not be a circle on a map, designated "Grade B". The replication must be performed in such a way that anyone who has viewed WLIO Television in the past 46 years will continue to receive WLIO, interference free, on its digital channel. This includes home viewers utilizing antenna systems, and communities with cable television service.

Coverage via Cable Television

In Allen County (OH), over 83% of the viewers of WLIO Television are utilizing cable television as their method to retrieve our signal.³ There are no guarantees that WLIO Television will be given a location on all current cable systems carrying WLIO. There is no "must carry" for DTV stations, a stipulation that WLIO would strongly endorse.

WLIO feels that WLIO-DT will not be guaranteed access to cable systems outside the Grade-A that presently carry WLIO.

WLIO feels that the Commission must give the cable television industry some incentives to carry new DTV signals of stations that have a history within the community utilizing cable service.

WLIO feels that failure of cable companies to carry the new DTV signals will cost the consumers access to this technology, and make the service un-profitable to WLIO.

WLIO feels that cable television must share some of the responsibility of simulcasting both NTSC and DTV services until the NTSC services are shut off.

If there are no viewers, what is the reason for the technology?

³ Nielsen Media Research "Lima OH", February 2000

Non-Cable/Antenna Reception

WLIO is concerned that the Commission assumes that many viewers will use directional "yagi"⁴ style reception antennas to receive DTV signals.

In reality, the number of viewers currently watching by means of an outdoor antenna is extremely low. This is due to the convenience of cable television.

WLIO feels that viewers will have to depend on outside antennas to receive DTV signals. Viewers will need to be re-educated on the use of outside reception antennas.

Historical

In the 1950s, 1960s, and later, many viewers used an exterior antenna to access over the air television signals. It was not unusual to drive through a neighborhood and see a small television antenna attached to the exterior of the home for the reception of television signals.

Within the last ten years many communities have instituted building codes against small towers for home television reception. Some neighborhood associations and gated communities prohibit the use of any external television reception antenna due to "cosmetic reasons". These regulations by local government and community organizations, in effect, prohibit the reception of "over the air" television broadcast signals by banning the instrument necessary to capture the signal and deliver it to a receiver.

Legislative Protection

The Federal Communications Commission, with the help of Congress, must introduce legislation to allow viewers to construct and use small external antennas. At no time should a local governing body prohibit a citizen from reception of an over the air broadcast except in circumstances where, on a case by case basis, it is proven that such equipment poses a direct threat to the safety of the individual.

Should the local governing body desire to prohibit a reasonable method of receiving over the air broadcasts, the expense and integrity of delivery of the DTV signal to one-hundred

⁴ An antenna, consisting of three or more elements and having a gain of 6 dB or more, used to enhance the reception of a television or radio signal. Various manufacturers sell this style antenna to the public.

percent of the population would be placed upon the body. Furthermore, the television broadcaster would be compensated for any necessary expenses to gain full compliance.

The rule for determining if a community must comply with this legislation would be based upon an historical count. If five percent or more of the population has, over a ten-year period, accessed an NTSC signal by over the air or cable television, and they can not receive the digital signal, they must be allowed to construct the necessary exterior antenna without delay.

This issue is most important in areas where cable service will not carry the DTV signal of an NTSC station.

WLIO Television, and other broadcasters, should not have any barriers in the way of delivering the DTV signal to the viewers.

WLIO believes that many viewers will be prohibited reasonable methods of reception due to covenants, new building codes, and neighborhood association rules.

CREATION OF WHITE OR UNDERSERVED AREAS

Several parties commented on a situation whereby an NTSC station could face interference from a DTV station. At the present time the Commission is accepting applications for DTV facilities to be located co-channel to NTSC facilities⁵ at distances less than two NTSC stations co-channel.

Neither the Commission nor those commenting have arrived at a workable solution should an existing NTSC station experience interference from a new DTV station.

The Commission fails to realize that UHF frequencies are subject to propagation changes in the spring and fall, which enhances the reception of signals at greater than Grade-B distances. The issue of distant UHF television reception by E-skip or Tropospheric conditions is so common place, that there is actually a hobby and several "clubs"⁶ where people report distant reception. At this writing, the UHF band has been very active for distant reception.

⁵ WLIO NTSC Channel 35 (661kw @ 540 ft), & WLWT-DT DTV Channel 35 (1,000kw @ 1,073 ft). Distance between both facilities calculated to be 113.93 miles, F.C.C. Flat Earth ref True North.

The Commission needs to clarify its position and how it will resolve issues where newly built DTV stations impact an existing NTSC station, and produce a loss of coverage or impact viewer's reception.

MODIFICATION OF CONSTRUCTION PERMIT

Parties commenting show some uncertainty towards the service area of a DTV station. As pointed out on pages 6 and 7 of this reply, WLIO has concerns that many viewers will need alternative means to receive WLIO Television's signal. This could be in the form of a home antenna system, a translator for a community, or the possible modification of WLIO Television's construction permit, or facilities.

Unless legislation is enacted, viewers may not have the option of directional reception antennas due to several factors. Among them are costs, local zoning, and covenants on towers and outside antennas. This puts the responsibility of delivery of signal to the viewer squarely on the shoulders of the broadcaster.

The Commission should be sensitive to both the needs to replicate the present viewer base, and the technical changes necessary to accomplish this replication with a DTV transmission system.

In short, the Commission must take whatever means it can to allow modifications to the construction permit of a new DTV stations, including a simple Form 302 filing which would allow stations a reasonable amount of time to complete construction.

The Commission should also allow a station to easily obtain a Special Temporary Authorization at lower facilities during the phase-in process in order to reduce the financial burden.

The Commission should understand that stations cannot serve the public interest, or remain profitable, if they are not allowed to replicate their service areas. Along with the reception issues, unnecessary paperwork and delays to make corrections to signal coverage could pose unrecoverable damage to a station's credibility, and profitability. It would also not be in the best interest of the public.

⁶ A list of such clubs is at <http://www.anarc.org/clublist.html>, and the WFTDA in particular reports on UHF television issues. Worldwide TV-FM DX Association (WTFDA): P.O. Box 501, Somersville, CT 06072 <http://www.anarc.org/wtfda>. Discussion list wtfda@topica.com.

SUMMARY

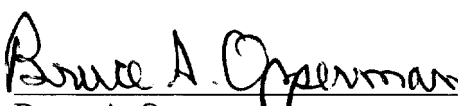
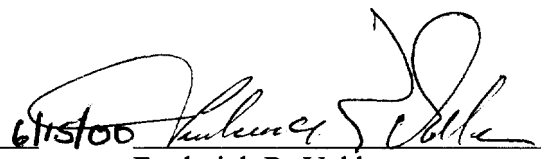
The undersigned feels that the change to digital from the public side will be slow.

Viewers will face numerous problems, unlike the days when the Color Standard was adopted. In the 1950's and 1960's, viewers had antennas on their homes for reception. The present black and white sets were not made obsolete by the transmission of color. The community attitude towards small towers and reception antennas was much different than it is today.

Our concerns are that we will not have the ability to deliver our DTV signal to all the people that presently watch our NTSC signal. WLIO does not suggest more coverage, and certainly does not expect less coverage.

We hope there are no barriers to prohibit any current viewer, regardless of the distance from our transmitter, from receiving our signal.

We trust that the Federal Communications Commission will do everything in its power to reduce the burden in constructing new DTV facilities. It is essential that stations not be overburdened by the high cost of DTV construction. It is imperative that the current viewer base of WLIO Television be maintained when the transition to digital is complete. Additionally, it is mandatory that the Commission implement "must carry" on existing cable systems currently carrying WLIO Television's NTSC signal.

 Bruce A. Opperman WLIO Television 1424 Rice Avenue Lima OH 45805-1949	 Frederick R. Vobbe WLIO Television 1424 Rice Avenue Lima OH 45805-1949
---	---